

TESTIMONY OF KATHY FLAHERTY, ADULT ADOPTEE

IN SUPPORT OF HB 6105: AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES BY ADULT ADOPTED PERSONS.

Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Senator Hwang, Representative Zullo and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am here before you today testifying on this bill solely in my personal capacity as a Connecticut resident who is an adult adoptee. I fall within the class of Connecticut adoptees, who by virtue of our date of birth and date of adoption, are unable to access a government document which contains a true and accurate representation of the facts related to our birth.

My birth certificate is an amended certificate of birth, issued first in October of 1968, when my adoption was finalized. It says that my parents, the only parents I have ever known, are my parents. However, it's not a true and accurate representation of the facts related to my birth. The laws of this state should not prohibit me from being able to access my original birth certificate, which is locked somewhere in a vault.

I've testified before this legislature four times on this issue. I'm hoping the fifth time is the charm.

DNA testing has found me a cousin on my father's side. If it were not for the pandemic, we would have already met in person. A friend who is far more capable of figuring out connections than I am continues to work on assembling the family trees on both sides. I should not have had to spit in a tube and mail my saliva to two different commercial companies to find out the truth of my origins.

My parents paid money to Catholic Charities to adopt me. I paid money to Catholic Charities to find my birth mother. They located her but she didn't want contact. You may recall from my prior testimony that Catholic Charities sent me that letter dated on my birthday.

I've paid money to Ancestry and 23andMe. The only money any adult adoptee should have to pay is to the vital records department of the municipality where we born. I will happily pay that fee.

Thank you for taking the time to read testimony from me, yet again, on this particular issue. I hope that this is the last time we need to do this. The government should not be in the business of keeping secrets – especially secrets which Connecticut law at the time I was born and adopted did not protect. All adult adoptees in Connecticut deserve access to their original birth certificates. It's time.

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